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Documents of the Chicano struggle



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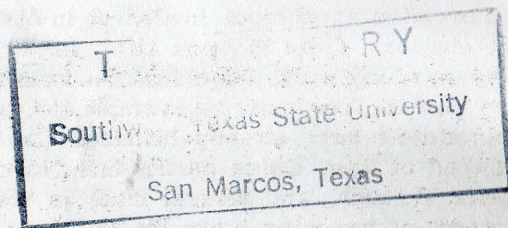
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THE COVER

The figure of the masked dancer is from a flat stamp from Tlaltelolco. These stamps were generally made of clay baked in kilns similar to those used by modern potters. They were made in flat and cylindrical forms for stamping flat surfaces, and concave and convex forms for stamping rounded surfaces. The Indians used a great variety of vegetable and mineral dyes for printing on skin, cloth, or paper. (From *Design Motifs of Ancient Mexico* by Jorge Enciso, Dover, 1953)

The background is detail from Aztec hieroglyphics on a pyramid at Monte Alban.

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INTRODUCTION

The first of the two documents presented here, *El Plan de Aztlán*, was adopted at the first National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver, Colorado, March 1969. The *plan* presented for the first time a clear statement of the growing nationalist consciousness of the Chicano people. It raised the concept of Aztlán,* a Chicano nation, and the need for Chicano control of the Chicano community. Referring to the Democratic and Republican parties as "the same animal with two heads that feed from the same trough," the *plan* pointed out that to achieve the goal of self-determination, would require an independent political party with Raza nationalism as its "common denominator."

Although the *Plan de Aztlán* has appeared in some Chicano publications, many Raza activists and others interested in the Chicano struggle remain unfamiliar with it. This edition will for the first time make the *plan* readily available to all.

The second document, intended as a general guide to action, is the basic programmatic statement adopted by the Oakland-Berkeley, California Raza Unida Party in November 1970. Building upon the ideas propounded in the *Plan de Aztlán*, it outlines a program for mobilizing La Raza around the key issues that affect their lives.

When first proposed in 1969, some viewed the idea of breaking with the capitalist politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties as "idealistic" or "impractical." Yet today, greater and greater numbers of La Raza are coming to recognize the need for such a break. In April 1970, the Crystal City Raza Unida Party swept into office in the first electoral victory of an independent all-Chicano party. This was followed by the statewide campaign of the Colorado Raza Unida Party which sprang up following the second Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver in March 1970. After winning the elections again in April 1971, the Crystal City Raza Unida Party now has solid majorities on both the school board and the city council. The inspiring example of Crystal City, where meaningful reforms have already benefited La Raza, has resulted in the spread of Raza Unida parties into Northern California, Los Angeles, Arizona, and several cities in South Texas and has the prospect of becoming statewide in Texas by 1972. These developments point toward important advances in the struggle for Chicano liberation.

It is hoped that these two documents will prove of value to those fighting for an end to the oppression of La Raza.

Antonio Camejo, October 1971

* Aztlán — The ancient Aztec name for what is now the Southwest.

EL PLAN DE AZTLAN

El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan

In the spirit of a new people that is conscious not only of its proud historical heritage but also of the brutal "gringo" invasion of our territories, *we*, the Chicano inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlán from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of their birth and consecrating the determination of our people of the sun, *declare* that the call of our blood is our power, our responsibility, and our inevitable destiny.

We are free and sovereign to determine those tasks which are justly called for by our house, our land, the sweat of our brows, and by our hearts. Aztlán belongs to those who plant the seeds, water the fields, and gather the crops and not to the foreign Europeans. We do not recognize capricious frontiers on the bronze continent.

Brotherhood unites us, and love for our brothers makes us a people whose time has come and who struggles against the foreigner "gabacho" who exploits our riches and destroys our culture. With our heart in our hands and our hands in the soil, we declare the independence of our mestizo nation. We are a bronze people with a bronze culture. Before the world, before all of North America, before all our brothers in the bronze continent, we are a nation, we are a union of free pueblos, we are *Aztlán*.

Por La Raza todo. Fuera de La Raza nada.

Program

El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán sets the theme that the Chicanos (La Raza de Bronze) must use their nationalism as the key or common denominator for mass mobilization and organization. Once we are committed to the idea and philosophy of El Plan de Aztlán, we can only conclude that social, economic, cultural, and political independence is the only road to total liberation from oppression, exploitation, and racism. Our struggle then must be for the control of our barrios, campos, pueblos, lands, our economy, our culture, and our political life. El Plan commits all levels of Chicano society—the barrio, the campo, the ranchero, the writer, the teacher, the worker, the professional—to La Causa.

Nationalism

Nationalism as the key to organization transcends all religious, political, class, and economic factions or boundaries. Nationalism is the common denominator that all members of La Raza can agree upon.

Organizational Goals

1. UNITY in the thinking of our people concerning the barrios, the pueblo, the campo, the land, the poor, the middle class, the professional—all committed to the liberation of La Raza.

2. ECONOMY: economic control of our lives and our communities can only come about by driving the exploiter out of our communities, our pueblos, and our lands and by controlling and developing our own talents, sweat, and resources. Cultural background and values which ignore materialism and embrace humanism will contribute to the act of cooperative buying and the distribution of resources and production to sustain an economic base for healthy growth and development. Lands rightfully ours will be fought for and defended. Land and realty ownership will be acquired by the community for the people's welfare. Economic ties of responsibility must be secured by nationalism and the Chicano defense units.

3. EDUCATION must be relative to our people, i.e., history, culture, bilingual education, contributions, etc. Community control of our schools, our teachers, our administrators, our counselors, and our programs.

4. INSTITUTIONS shall serve our people by providing the service necessary for a full life and their welfare on the basis of restitution, not handouts or beggar's crumbs. Restitution for past economic slavery, political exploitation, ethnic and cultural psychological destruction and denial of civil and human rights. Institutions in our community which do not serve the people have no place in the community. The institutions belong to the people.

5. SELF-DEFENSE of the community must rely on the combined strength of the people. The front line defense will come from the barrios, the campos, the pueblos, and the ranchitos. Their involvement as protectors of their people will be given respect and dignity. They in turn offer their responsibility and their lives for their people. Those who place themselves in the front ranks for their people do so out of love and carnalismo. Those institutions which are fattened by our brothers to provide employment and political pork barrels for the gringo will do so only as acts of liberation and for La Causa. For the very young there will no longer be acts of juvenile delinquency, but revolutionary acts.

6. CULTURAL values of our people strengthen our identity and the moral backbone of the movement. Our culture unites and educates the family of La Raza towards liberation with one heart and one mind. We must insure that our writers, poets, musicians, and artists produce literature and art that is appealing to our people and relates to our revolutionary culture. Our cultural values of life, family, and home will serve as a powerful weapon to defeat the gringo dollar value system and encourage the process of love and brotherhood.

7. POLITICAL LIBERATION can only come through independent action on our part, since the two-party system is the same animal with two heads that feed from the same trough. Where we are a majority, we will control; where we are a minority, we will represent a pressure group; nationally, we will represent one party: La Familia de La Raza!

Action

1. Awareness and distribution of El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán. Presented at every meeting, demonstration, confrontation, courthouse, institution, administration, church, school, tree, building, car, and every place of human existence.

2. September 16, on the birthdate of Mexican Independence, a national walk-out by all Chicanos of all colleges and schools to be sustained until the complete revision of the educational system: its policy makers, administration, its curriculum, and its personnel to meet the needs of our community.

3. Self-defense against the occupying forces of the oppressors at every school, every available man, woman, and child.

4. Community nationalization and organization of all Chicanos: El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán.

5. Economic program to drive the exploiter out of our community and a welding together of our people's combined resources to control their own production through cooperative effort.

6. Creation of an independent local, regional, and national political party.

A nation autonomous and free—culturally, socially, economically, and politically—will make its own decisions on the usage of our lands, the taxation of our goods, the utilization of our bodies for war, the determination of justice (reward and punishment), and the profit of our sweat.

El Plan de Aztlán is the plan of liberation!

Oakland Area

RAZA UNIDA PARTY PROGRAM

Preamble

I. When we begin to illuminate and examine the so-called "dark chapters" in the history of this nation, the most affluent and powerful nation in the world, we see that the history of La Raza is to be found therein, and that from the beginning, the United States used the labor of our people to build not only the Southwest but this entire country and to amass fortunes for the Anglo exploiters of our people.

We examine further. We see that our lands were stolen from us. We see that the only payment was in poverty, starvation, disease, racist mockeries made of our language and culture and race. This was the payment for the labor which our people put into the building of this country, for the lands that were unjustly stolen from us. This country has seen fit to use and brutalize our people and to attempt at the same time to trick us into thinking that it bears no responsibility for our oppression and that its greatest desire is to help us. The two political parties in this country, and particularly the Democratic Party, have been the primary tools of our oppression.

Because we see through the trickery of the Democratic and Republican politicians and see that these two political parties have completely failed us in their promises and understand that in reality they have been working for the benefit of the wealthy Anglos by furthering and perpetuating the oppression of our people;

Because our people are still starving, are still being miseducated, are being increasingly brutalized by police authority;

Because poverty and death from curable diseases are still rampant among our people;

Because our people are not given the benefit of the justice that is due them as citizens of this land and therefore fill the jails in outrageous numbers;

Because the denial of education and job opportunities to our women has placed them in an even more oppressed situation than the men of La Raza;

And because this total, racist oppression of our people is an integral part of an economic system which uses as its political

arm the two-party system, two parties working for the same wealthy few, two parties between which there is no significant difference in our eyes;

Given that these factors of oppression form the common denominator that unites us, THEREFORE, WE THE PEOPLE OF LA RAZA, have decided to reject the existing political parties of our oppressors and take it upon ourselves to form LA RAZA UNIDA PARTY, which will serve as a unifying force in our struggle for self-determination.

We understand that our real liberation and freedom will only come about through independent political action on our part. Independent political action, of which electoral activity is but one aspect, means involving La Raza Unida Party at all levels of struggle in actions which will serve to involve and educate our people. We recognize that self-determination can only come about through the full and total participation of La Raza in the struggle.

Because of the cultural genocide committed against our indigenous population by an outside invader and in full recognition of the daily oppression, humiliation, degradation, psychological and spiritual assassination, economic exploitation and the continuing misery of our people in violation of their basic constitutional and human rights, we consider it not only our right but our obligation to struggle for our full and complete liberation by any means necessary.

These oppressive conditions that form the common denominator that unites us give rise to a spiritual cohesiveness, a collective consciousness, that forms the basis of RAZA NATIONALISM.

We further specify that although the protection of our culture and the continuing maintenance of it will be a necessary part of our struggle, we recognize that our culture alone cannot produce our freedom and that only an organized and protracted struggle, confronting our oppressors at every level and involving the greatest number of our people, can bring about our goal of complete self-determination and total freedom.

II. La Raza Unida Party will not support any candidate of the Democratic or Republican Party or any individual who supports these parties.

III. Membership: Any person of La Raza registered in La Raza Unida Party and/or who works actively to support the program and activities of the party will be considered a member with the right to participate in all decision-making processes of the party on the basis of one person, one vote.

By "La Raza" we mean those people who are descendants of or come from Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Antilles.

Program

I. Political Platform

DOMESTIC POLICY

A. La Raza will no longer tolerate that its people be used as instruments of repression against Third World people (armed forces and police). End the draft and exempt all Raza youth from military service.

B. Full equality of the Spanish language: This includes all federal, state, municipal, and private agencies which must provide and carry out all functions within our community in English and Spanish.

C. La Raza Unida Party feels it is of the utmost importance to struggle for the concept of Community Control. By this we mean Community Control over all institutions of the community—schools, hospitals, libraries, welfare agencies, police, etc., that affect La Raza.

1. The community must control all money, government or private, "with no strings attached" that will be allocated for La Raza and its community.

2. La Raza Unida Party calls for the establishment of councils of La Raza to administer all institutions within our community. All councils will be democratically elected by the community.

D. La Raza Unida Party calls upon the community to break with the two-party system (Democratic-Republican) which has been one of the key instruments in the oppression of La Raza.

E. The constitutional right of farmworkers to organize their union and formulate their own demands must be respected.

F. La Raza Unida Party supports the struggles of all Third World peoples in the U. S.

G. La Raza Unida Party supports all attempts by the American working class to organize and struggle independently for their well-being.

H. All Raza people 18 years of age or older must have the constitutional right to vote be they felons, immigrants, or nationals.

I. La Raza Unida Party demands that the pollution of our environment halt. La Raza Unida Party takes the position that the pollution of our environment is a crime against our people.

That the elimination of this pollution be completely financed by the corporations that produce it. That there be community control boards on a national level to ensure that these corporations eliminate the damage that they have created to our environment. La Raza Unida Party recognizes that the ecology of our environment has been used as an issue to obscure the fundamental political and economic problems of this society on all levels, local and national. To La Raza Unida Party ecology is just one aspect of the manifold problems that we face.

FOREIGN POLICY

La Raza Unida Party supports the right of self-determination of all nations. We are opposed to the intervention of the United States into the internal affairs of any nation. We demand an end to United States support to every oppressive regime from Mexico to Vietnam.

A. We demand the release of all political prisoners in Latin America, especially our brothers in Mexico.

B. Free Puerto Rico.

C. Immediate withdrawal from Southeast Asia.

D. Support of the Palestinian Liberation Struggle.

E. Free all colonies and territories of the United States.

II. Economic Platform

La Raza Unida Party feels that economic control of our lives and of our community is of the utmost importance.

A. Equality of the Spanish language in all the places of employment and business.

B. Rank-and-file democratic control of the unions; the elimination of all racist practices in the labor movement.

C. La Raza Unida Party calls for full employment of La Raza at all levels of the economy.

D. Escalator clauses in all union contracts to assure automatic wage increases with the rising cost of living.

E. A guaranteed annual income wage beginning at 18 years of age.

F. A shorter work-week with no reduction in pay.

G. One hundred percent taxation on all profits of corporations or businesses which engage in discrimination against La Raza.

H. Rent control agencies under the direct control of La Raza community, which would provide adequate housing for all persons of La Raza that would not cost more than 5 percent of his or her annual earnings.

I. Public ownership and control of all public utilities.

J. A minimum wage that meets a decent standard of living for all in La Raza.

K. The right of Raza *ancianitos* to secure an equitable old age must be provided by this society. Aged Raza citizens have helped to build this society and should, therefore, be provided with free medical care, free housing, free food, and all the essential things needed to continue to lead a dignified life.

L. La Raza Unida Party demands that the right of the ill to have adequate and free medical and hospital attention be met.

III. Education Platform

The community should have control of the entire educational system from the nursery schools through college.

A. Democratic elections of community control boards to supervise our schools within our communities.

B. Our educational system and curriculum will meet the needs of our children to obtain economic security, give them a knowledge of themselves and an understanding of our true history and culture.

C. Bilingual education.

D. Parent involvement in every phase of school life.

E. All Raza groups will be entitled to use school facilities to promote activities beneficial to the community and to further our liberation.

F. A full program of adult education.

G. Dismiss all school officials who victimize or insult Raza children on social or cultural grounds.

H. Free education from preschool through college with open enrollment and subsistence wages. Free lunches, breakfasts, and books.

I. The guarantee of high school rights that include freedom of expression, freedom to organize, to pass out literature, and all other rights which are safeguarded in the constitution must be provided.

IV. Self-Defense

A. We have the human right to defend our lives by any means necessary.

B. Community control of the police and all the judicial processes.

C. Free all political prisoners.

D. La Raza Unida Party supports and defends the full constitutional and human rights of La Raza — be they citizens, immigrants, or nationals.

E. All Raza men and women in the jails are political prisoners. The very nature of the judicial penal system in this country makes La Raza inmates political prisoners because that system does not afford them their basic constitutional rights.

1. La Raza has not had the benefit of trial by a jury of our peers.

2. La Raza does not have the money to pay for justice (that is, lawyers, court fees, adequate research assistance).

3. La Raza is railroaded by public defenders who misrepresent us and tell us to plead guilty.

4. The economic-social conditions that La Raza is forced to live in is the very reason for the offenses committed, which have in turn led to the imprisonment of all La Raza men and women now there.

F. Dismantling of the California Adult Authority Board — to be replaced by parole review boards in the community from which the prisoner comes.

G. Community control boards to administer the functioning of jails — these boards to be made up of 50 percent community elected officials and 50 percent inmates elected by inmates themselves.

H. Raza inmates have the right to form unions to implement collective bargaining.

I. Raza inmates must be paid federal minimum wages.

J. Full educational opportunities for all Raza inmates must be provided and include fully autonomous Raza departments.

K. On-the-job training for La Raza inmates in the field of their choosing.

L. Visitation rights which will include transportation for families and conjugal visitation.

V. Raza Women's Platform

PREAMBLE

We have arrived at a point in our struggle for self-determination where we have collectively, both men and women, decided to embark on a higher level of political activity in the form of our independent La Raza Unida Political Party.

We, the people of La Raza, want this party to fully encompass all the aspects of the needs of our people. We want this party to work for the eradication of all the inequalities and oppressive forces functioning to perpetuate our bondage.

We feel that the importance of the party will be determined by the measure to which it takes into account the needs of La Raza as a whole, and by the measure to which it actively works to meet those needs and to eradicate every form of exploitation which burdens us.

For our women who live under an economic structure which systematically uses and oppresses women to further its own ends, ends to making profits by any means necessary off the backs of whomever it is easily possible to physically identify, isolate, and create myths around, there exists a triple exploitation, a triple degradation; they are exploited as women, as people of La Raza, and they suffer from the poverty which straitjackets all of La Raza. Because of the particular nature of their oppression, within our women lies a tremendous potential for commitment to serious struggle. Their participation, if we eliminate all obstacles, will accelerate and strengthen our struggle to a fantastic degree.

We feel that without the recognition by all of La Raza of this special form of oppression which our women suffer, our movement will greatly suffer.

We want to eliminate the exploitation of man by man in every form — to eliminate the oppression of our women so that both men and women, in the process of our struggle and when our struggle bears fruit, will be equal human beings with all of the rights and responsibilities of a truly free people and without any kind of oppression in any form.

Bearing this in mind and recognizing that a people as a whole can never be liberated if an entire sector of that people remains in bondage, we of the Raza Unida Party state our position as follows:

A. We shall respect the right of self-determination for our women to state what their specific needs and problems are, and how they feel that these needs can be met and these problems can be eliminated, as a basic principle of our party.

B. The party encourages La Raza women to meet in Raza women's groups wherever the movement is functioning, in order to enable the women to discuss the direction that their participation is taking and the particular needs of Raza women they feel must be acted upon. We encourage that these groups be formed to enable the women to aid in the recruitment of more women to participate in a politically conscious way and in all levels of the struggle.

C. The party will include Raza women in all decision-making meetings, paying them due respect when they offer opinions and speak. Our women will always be fairly represented in planning committees, in public relations functions as spokeswomen, in workshops, and in discussion groups as leaders.

D. Raza men and women both will cooperate fully, in this party and at home, in the very difficult task we have before us of freeing our women and encouraging them in every way we can, at all times, to become involved in every level of the struggle and in working actively towards the elimination of all attitudes and practices that have relegated our women to the unquestionably bonded positions they are now in.

CHILD CARE

A. Child-care centers controlled by Raza must be made available for Raza in schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, totally free of charge, wherever our people are found.

B. These child-care centers will be open 24 hours a day and must accommodate children from the age of 45 days through the preschool ages.

C. Medical attention will be made available for the children and facilities will be available for children who may be sick—with the necessary medicine free of charge.

D. These centers will function as educational centers as well as care centers.

F. These centers will be controlled and run by both Raza men and women.

WORK

A. An end to inequality in pay because of sex or race. Statistics show that for the same job women now get paid half the wage earned by men. The poorest suffer from this the most. Raza women as a group are paid even less than their underpaid Raza male counterparts.

B. Fifty percent of Raza women who work, work as domestics. We want job openings in all areas of work for Raza women, specifically in full-time employment with salaries to meet the standard of living no matter what it may be and no matter how much it increases. All Raza women who apply for jobs, in no matter what area, must be accepted. If training is needed, it should be given with pay.

C. Maternity and paternity leaves with pay and with a guarantee of a job on return.

BIRTH CONTROL

A. Clinics and agencies within our communities that distribute any birth-control information and/or abortion counseling and information and clinics and agencies that pass out birth-control devices and perform abortions *must* be community-controlled, and a woman who is counseled must be thoroughly informed about all the dangers and possible side effects of any devices or operations.

B. No forced abortions or sterilizations of our women.

C. The ultimate decision whether to have a child or not should be left up to the woman.

EDUCATION

A. Intensive recruitment of Raza women into the schools—with Raza counselors and tutors to help the women stay in school and to encourage them to enter all areas of study.

B. Guaranteed jobs for all Raza women upon graduation in whatever field the women choose.

C. Part of the education of our women will be dedicated to the study of the history of the oppression of women within the framework of our background and to the study of the role which Raza women have played in the history of our people.

FURTHER READING

On this and related subjects, from Pathfinder Press:

On the Chicano Movement

Chicano Liberation and Revolutionary Youth/Mirta Vidal

Chicanas Speak Out! Women: New Voice of La Raza/Mirta Vidal

Documents of the Chicano Struggle/anthology

La Raza Unida Party in Texas/Mario Compean, Jose Angel Gutierrez

La Raza! Why a Chicano Party? Why Chicano Studies?/Froben

Lozada, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, et al.

Mexico, Latin America, Cuba

The Youth Movement and the Alienation of Society/Jose Revueltas

Allende's Chile: Is It Going Socialist?/Peter Camejo

Douglas Bravo Speaks: Interview with a Venezuelan Guerrilla Leader

Cuba and Problems of Workers Democracy/Harry Ring

How Cuba Uprooted Race Discrimination/Harry Ring

Women and the Cuban Revolution/Fidel Castro, Linda Jenness

A New Stage in the Advance of Cuban Socialism/Fidel Castro

Fidel Castro's Tribute to Che Guevara/Fidel Castro

On Vietnam and World Revolution/Che Guevara

Socialism and Man/Che Guevara

Books

Che Guevara Speaks

cloth \$4.95, paper

Cuba for Beginners/RIUS (cartoon history)

cloth \$3.95, paper

General

Genocide Against the Indians/George Novack

Black Power in the Caribbean/John Riddell, Tony Thomas

In Defense of Black Nationalism/Tony Thomas

The Case for an Independent Black Party/Introduction by

Paul Boutelle

Race Prejudice: How It Began, When It Will End/George Breitman

How to Make a Revolution in the U.S./Peter Camejo

Liberalism, Ultraleftism, or Mass Action/Peter Camejo

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